

REPLACEMENT SPECIFICATION PARAGRAPH

Please enter the following replacement specification paragraphs:

[0069]

A1 With the notification criteria defined, chat site 330 monitors chat rooms 332 and 336 as online users 306 enter and exit the rooms. Whenever a trigger from the notification criteria is met, chat site 330 notifies service provider 302 of the event. In notifying service provider 302, chat site 330 provides an identification of subscriber 310 (e.g., a user name), a message to give subscriber 310, and the method by which to reach subscriber 310. Chat site 330 determines the subscriber identification and message from the notification criteria of database 308. Chat site 330 determines the method by which to reach subscriber 310 from the contact information stored in database 308.

[0077]

A2 In the above embodiment of Figure 3, a triggering event specified in database 308 initiates the notification to subscriber 310. In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, the users 306 logged into a chat room initiate the notification. Specifically, users 306 forward a message to subscriber 310 requesting that subscriber 310 log into a particular chat room. Users 306 can create this message through global computer network 304 using cooperative software provisioned at users 306 and chat site 330 or service provider 302. Service provider 302 delivers the message to subscriber 310 and returns a response from subscriber 310 to users 306, as described above for the triggering-event embodiment. The response tells users 306 whether subscriber 310 will accept their invitation and join them online in the particular chat room.

[0078]

A3 In this alternate embodiment, users 306 do not have to subscribe to service provider 302 to initiate the notification. Instead, users 306 trigger notifications using the notification service of existing subscribers. Accordingly, database 308 contains a list of subscribers to the notification service. Database 308 marks each subscriber in the list to indicate whether the subscriber authorizes chat site 330 to list the user's name on chat site 330 and to allow any user to notify the subscriber and ask the subscriber to log into a chat room. Chat site 330 accesses database 308, retrieves the subscribers that are marked as receptive to notifications from any user, and lists those subscribers on chat site 300. Users 306 can then peruse the list of subscribers and select any or all of the subscribers in the list to send notifications requesting that the subscribers join the online chat room interaction. In selecting subscribers to notify, software provisioned at users 306, chat site 330, or service provider 302 could restrict users 306 to sending pre-written messages, or, optionally, could allow users 306 to send customized messages.